

A. Introduction:

The South Central Subcommittee met each Thursday for five weeks at Shamrock Springs Elementary School. The group was small and consisted of a core group of six individuals. The jurisdiction of the group is north of 146th Street, east of Ditch Road, south of SR 32, and west of US 31. Considering that this quadrant was mostly developed, the group discussed broader planning issues and planned specific parcels. The group worked through five exercises, these exercises included listing the planning issues for the quadrant, creating a vision statement for the group, doing an area SWOT analysis, working on a development criteria exercise and a land use location exercise for the whole township.

The following is a review of the exercises completed by the South Central subcommittee:

B. Planning Issues Exercise:

The following is a list of planning issues the South Central subcommittee identified. The planning issues exercise addressed broad topics such as utility infrastructure, parks and recreational opportunities, thoroughfares, planned developments, institutions, appropriate land uses and development quality concerns.

SC Planning Issues:

- Viking Meadows
- Centennial North and South
- Village Farms easements for horse trails
- Traffic on 146th, US 31 and SR 32
- Potential for improvements to Oak Ridge, Springmill, and Ditch
- Utilities/Infrastructure
- Lack of large lot sizes
- “Westfield is becoming a slum” – smaller homes more burden on the schools
- Need for mass transit
- 161st & Springmill rezone issue
- Road size – can’t accommodate population
- Trails – might decline home values, will provide interconnectivity between subdivisions
- Potential Wal-Mart development
- Possible commercial development locations
- South Park, needs effective buffering
- Drainage issues from development
- Proposed Quaker Park expansion
- Possible expansion of High School?
- Maple Knoll
- Maple Glen School and bus facility

Planning Issues Analysis:

In general, the South Central group is concerned about broad planning issues such as having adequate thoroughfares to address the increasing development in the quadrant. The group is also concerned with development quality issues for the new planned developments of Maple Knoll, Centennial North and South and Viking Meadows. Concern was expressed that the developments in the South Central region had smaller homes, which would produce more children, and ultimately overburden the schools. There was a fear that the continuation of this type of development would decrease property values. The committee would like to save the remaining open land as estate lots. The group was very much against the rezoning project at 161st and Springmill, and would like to keep the commercial development on the SR 32 corridor. The group also explored the possibilities of a Tech Park and Wal-Mart locating in the area. The group mentioned wanting to see more professional businesses (doctor's offices, lawyer's offices etc. – low impact commercial) located in the area along the major thoroughfares. The group discussed parks and trails, and the need for accessibility between neighborhoods and recreational space. There was also mention of development creating drainage issues in the area.

C. Vision Statement:

The group drafted a vision statement at the first meeting. It is listed below:

Within the next twenty (20) years, the South Central Quadrant will include:

- More parks
- Less sprawling development
- Aesthetically pleasing, high square footage, low density (estate lots) development
- Connectivity between and within developments (sidewalks, signalized pedestrian crossings, bridge over 146th St. for Monon)
- Better roads and other alternate modes of transportation (bike lanes, mass transit, park and ride)
- Preserve rural areas (land trusts, conserving flood plains)
- Encouraging a corporate campus and professional office development on SR32
- Promoting development sensitive to drainage issues

Vision Statement Analysis:

The group did not all agree on the created vision statement. Only two of the six members of the group signed the vision statement.

D. SWOT Analysis:

During the second meeting, the committee did a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the South Central quadrant. The SWOT results are as follows:

Strengths

- Village Farms – homes, wide streets, nice to drive through
- High education level of residents
- Good development base
- Proximity to Carmel
- Percentage of development
- Quaker Park
- Proximity to Public Safety building
- Post Office is accessible

Mixed land uses

Weaknesses

Narrow roads
Poor planning – overall appearance
Lack of sidewalks
Schools vs. Growth
Density – too high
Lack of architectural standards
Enforcement of ordinances is lacking
Lack of appropriate regulations to back up comprehensive plan
Lack of truck routes and weight limits – trucks are ruining the roads

Opportunities

Ability to better connect subdivisions
Large number of voters in quadrant
Rural character
Amount of green space – usable land
Downtown development
Opportunity for “different” development (Golden Oaks)
Opportunity for a “wheel washing” business to locate here, to protect roads during construction
Ability to set weight limits for trucks in construction areas

Threats

Redistricting
Annexation
Narrow roads
Not being able to preserve old town character
PUD’s – developers take advantage of them
Not able to properly transition between developments
Power of developers

Listed below are the top three concerns in all four categories:

Strengths:

TOP 3

Schools: Shamrock Springs, Oak Trace, St. Maria Goretti
Resident participation – very high
Current landscape

Weaknesses

TOP 3

161st & Springmill Project
Traffic
Taxes
Higher utility bills, higher development costs

Opportunities

TOP 3

Opportunity for Westfield/Carmel development partnership
Ability to have more parks and trails
SR 32 commercial development

Threats

TOP 3

TAXES

Poor decisions from Town Hall – lack of representation

Possibility of high density

SWOT Analysis:

The committee is very concerned with general governance issues such as the lack of representation of the Township residents' concerns at the Town Council level, as well as high taxes. These issues are seen as general weaknesses and threats, which are not directly affected by planning decisions. At this meeting, the committee was informed of the newly rendered court decision about the rezoning at 161st and Springmill. There was a general consensus that we had an opportunity to learn from our neighbors, (Carmel & Fishers) and create good development in Westfield. The committee also sees opportunities to expand the park and trail network, and encourage professional businesses to come to the area. Traffic is another major concern for these citizens. The committee sees great strengths in the schools and the high level of resident participation on community decisions including planning issues.

Development Criteria Exercise:

At the third meeting, the group discussed the different criteria for development. This discussion was facilitated by staff, and concentrated on the criteria for development of the five main land use types; residential, commercial, industrial, parks and recreation, and institutional uses. The criteria are listed below:

Residential

Access to main thoroughfares – US 31, SR32 and SR 38
More than one access to major roads for subdivisions
Multi family on the corners of main intersections
Trees, sidewalks, landscaping
Should be in close proximity to schools
Development should be close to parks
Can be near low impact, high end commercial uses
Balance of residential types

Institutional

Schools – NOT on high traffic roads
Located on an adequate road system
NOT near commercial or industrial uses
Collocation of schools and libraries
Buffer utilities from the street

Commercial

Mixed use
Blending different commercial uses
Plans must be held to existing architectural standards
Access to US 31, SR 32 and SR 38
Diverse commercial – small & large

Parks and Recreation

- Provide adequate recreation
- Take advantage of water ways
- Preserve green space
- Diversity in activities (ball fields, play grounds—weigh community's needs)
- Connect trails with parks
- Need more trailheads
- Some commercial along trails – low impact commercial
- Need for a large park like Cool Creek

Industrial

- Access to US 31, SR 32 and SR 38
- Buffers: green space, office park, tree lines
- NOT: Single Family Residential, schools and children's activities
- High end, low impact commercial can be next to industrial uses to act as a buffer
- Have a park within an industrial area
- Encourage lower impact industry

Development Criteria Analysis:

The committee analyzed development criteria for both their area and Township wide. The committee wants to see balanced residential development. Residential subdivisions should have more than one entrance to major roads to prevent traffic problems. The group talked about having better circulation within subdivisions including possibly using less cul-de-sacs, adding sidewalks, and using internal traffic control devices. The committee also stated that multifamily would work on the intersections of main thoroughfares. The committee wishes to see schools developed away from major thoroughfares so that it will protect the safety of the children getting to and from school. The committee also wanted to see another large Township wide park such as Cool Creek. Citizens want to see mixed types of commercial development. Mixed use residential was also determined to be a possibility in some areas. Finally, the South Central subcommittee would like to see some more low impact industrial development, with adequate buffers.

F. Land Use Designation Exercise Analysis:

At the fourth meeting, the group worked on a land use designation exercise. The map is included in the appendix of this report. Because the area was mainly developed, the committee decided that they had enough multi family and industrial development, although they did designate these uses on the map. The committee also wanted to preserve some remaining horse farms and flood prone areas from development. The group addressed the needs for more ballfields, and some development implications of pipelines.

G. Conclusion:

Overall, the South Central subcommittee did all the exercises in the time originally allotted. The group also worked well with the limited amount of open land available in the South Central quadrant.

The subcommittee hopes that these recommendations will help the Steering Committee put together a Comprehensive Plan that will fit the needs of all Washington Township residents.

Appendix

Meeting Agendas

Sign In Sheet

Land Use Designation Map

Aerial Photograph